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CHAPTER I.

A YOUNG man sat with his head resting on his hands in a dull and cheerless garret;—after a time he raised his head, and these were his thoughts as he looked out at the murky patch of sky—"Would that fairies, gnomes, elfs, griffins, and all the rest of the wonders of fairy land were real. O, if there were only an enchanted princess to rescue, how willinglyI would try my fortune—yes, anything but this miserable life. I have energy, and can get no work."

"Your wish is granted," said a voice, and looking in some alarm to see who spoke, he beheld a curious-looking dwarf, whose eyes glittered like diamonds.

His beard reached to his knees, and his hair was in bristles, so that he wore no hat. He carried a stick in his hand, with a very large knob on the top in the shape of a monkey's head, the head almost seemed alive, the eyes were so cunning and bright, and the teeth so natural. Zeman was very frightened at his wish coming to pass so quickly, nevertheless he put a bold face on the matter, and asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Alte; and I can help you to your desire. A princess lies in an enchanted castle. Many have tried to rescue her; but all have failed. The castle is guarded by two large birds who are very fond of human eyes, and have enjoyed many. One of these birds must be killed, and a key will drop out of its mouth. A particular feather out of the wing of the other is wanted to oil the lock of the castle, for it is rusty. Your path will be through enchanted forests, and you will be beset by beautiful creatures who have lured many to destruction. Lovely voices will entice you, seductive scenes tempt you. What do you think of your wish now? Remember, there is no turning back; it is ruin or success."

"Just what I want. I left my native village to

seek my fortune, and have not had the remotest chance of finding it until now. Shall I gain riches? for I am poor."

"Do you mean such as these?" and Alte put his hand into a pouch and drew forth a handful of precious stones that flashed like a stream of light. "All these and many more will be yours when your task is finished."

"And who has enchanted the lady?" Zeman asked.

"A great magician, Gamecrane. He loves the fair Hyremtha, but cannot make her his unless she consents, for her grandmother has that slight power over him. So he keeps her safely in his enchanted castle. Occasionally he goes to see her to ask her if she is ready to be his, but she says no; then he goes away shaking the castle in his fury. He threatens to turn her to stone soon, unless she grants his wish. She has a little bird that her grand-mother has given her that talks and tells her when anyone approaches to her rescue; but the two birds who guard the castle are its deadly enemies, and many a chase does the little creature have. This much I have told you, but there is much more to learn. I will do what I can to help you. Here are

seven hairs out of my beard. When you are in need of help, burn one, but not until you cannot get help any other way. Take care of them and do not part with one. Do not drink anything but water; for Gamecrane will sorely harass and torment you."

"How shall I light the hairs?" Zeman asked.

"Rub two stones together. Start on your quest as soon as you can, and hasten on your way, for Gamecrane will soon again visit the beautiful Hyremtha. Proceed to the river, and there you will find a boat. Get in, and you must be guided by circumstances. But, remember, as soon as you begin your quest Gamecrane will try in every way to stop and ruin you. So once again, be careful," and Alte vanished.

Now Zeman felt very strange to think that such an adventure had happened to him; and, like very many people, he was astonished at having his wish granted. Certainly the dangers seemed very great, but a brave heart, a careful head, and Alte's assistance would help him. So the next morning he started on his quest, and on the river he found the boat waiting for him. It was a fairy looking craft, with no oars or any means of propelling it; nevertheless, as soon

as he stepped in, it flew away from the shore at a rapid rate, not a little alarming Zeman. But he soon regained his courage and quite enjoyed the soothing motion of the boat, although he did wonder where he was going.

All at once he heard a splashing and rushing of water, and then saw a monstrous fish with glaring eyes and open mouth, swimming swiftly after the boat, and gaining on it every minute. The drops of sweat stood on Zeman's face, as he could not do any thing, for he had no weapon. On, and on, the monster came, and at last Zeman recovering his self-possession, cast about in his mind what to do, and to his great joy he saw a spear lying in the bottom of the boat. He grasped it eagerly and waited; but the fish did not seem inclined to come near and slackened speed. Now, to his surprise, the boat was motionless on the water, and he was determined to kill the fishy monster if possible, so using his spear to propel the boat, he advanced.

"Death to the enemies of the fair Hyremtha!" he shouted, and urging his boat along at its full speed, he suddenly raised his spear and thrust it down the monster's throat, intending to let go the handle, but it darted so suddenly down under water

that Zeman went with him—down, down, down, through the blue waters, where, he knew not; but he did not feel as though he was being drowned. He let go the spear, and swam a little distance, but he need not have feared the monster, for he disappeared and he never saw it again. He found that, although he might try to swim to shore, some irresistible power was pressing him down so that he soon reached the bottom of the water. His feet rested on a carpet of delicate green seaweed. Fairy-like grottos of pink and white coral met his astonished gaze, and in the distance he could see a splendid palace built of pure white, adorned with many-tinted shells and red coral. He was exceedingly pleased that he had undertaken his adventure, to witness such scenes as these. Wandering on he came to a more exquisite grotto than he had as yet seen, of virgin white, with a silvery shell shining here and there like a star. It looked so fragile that a breath would destroy it. But he entered, and his steps were hushed by the silver sand. He went into an inner room, and beheld a beautiful maiden who looked very sad; her eyes were cast down and she sighed heavily. Her face was fair as alabaster, her hair long and fair, twisted about with

strings of pearls, while her dress of delicate green was thickly embroidered with the same six pure stones. She raised her eyes and saw Zeman standing before her.

"What do you want, sir stranger?" she asked, her voice reminding him of the soft rush of waters. So he told her of his adventure.

"Wonderful mortal," she exclaimed, "and are you in search of my dear Hyremtha?"

"Yes," he replied briefly.

"I was just indulging in sad thoughts about her. But come to yonder palace, I must tell the King, my father, of your arrival." So he followed her, and they reached the palace, they passed through corridors, and spacious rooms, and entered one—a perfect gem, with its furniture of mother-of-pearl; its pale green carpet, its starry walls. On a table was spread refreshments—fruit and wine, on curious shells, beautified by art; but he could see no one but his guide—they were alone.

"Where is the King?" he asked.

"He is at present holding a high court concerning you and your quest, for he intends helping you."

"But how does he know me?" Zeman demanded in wonder.

"Do you not know, mortal, that all was known to us concerning you as soon as you touched the water?" and she laughed musically. "But while you are waiting partake of something to refresh yourself, and my maidens shall amuse you the while."

She rang a bell, and immediately a troop of beautiful water-nymphs made their appearance, dancing and seeming to float in the air, or water. Zeman hardly knew which. How graceful their movements, what lithe limbs, what splendid hair, and their melodious voices, sounding like the soft rush of waters, soothed and almost sent him to sleep. Then one beautiful creature brought him a cup of crystal, in which was rich ruby-coloured wine. She offered it with enchanting grace; but he replaced it on the table, saying, "Nay, fair maiden, I will watch you longer; besides, such wine as this is not for me."

Then the dance commenced again, more enchantingly beautiful, if possible, than before, and one sang a song that told of the brave deeds that Zeman *would do*, the rest of the beautiful throng joining in the refrain, until Zeman was almost bewitched by the exquisite sounds, and, perhaps, by the things that he *would do*.

Again the beautiful maiden brought him the crystal cup—it was at his lips, and he was just going to drink when it was dashed away, and all was darkness.

When Zeman somewhat recovered from his surprise, he could not understand where he was. It was very dark, and he fancied he heard strange sounds. The air of the place was heavy and confined. He remembered what had befallen him—how the cup had been dashed from his lips, and with shame he recalled Alte's words. He had not looked for temptation in the guise of pleasure. The sweet sights and sounds had entranced him, and yet he had said no the first time. And then he heard a piping voice sing—

A lovely lady languishes,
In a castle dim and drear,
Without one hope to comfort her
Or a single friend to cheer;
For Zeman is untrue,
Who intended to pursue
His quest, the wide world round
Until his love was found,
To carry her safe and sound
From the castle dim and drear.

"Who is that?" Zeman asked.

The voice replied:—"I am Bebo, my lady Hyremtha's bird. I am come to tell you that my lady was expecting you, but is afraid to hope now."

"But I will come as soon as ever I can. Give her my loyalty and love, and tell her so."

"But you forgot what Alte said."

"Yes, I did, and the cup was dashed from my lips."

"I did that," returned Bebo. "I love my mistress so much that when I can I help her would-be knights who say so much and do so little."

Zeman felt reproved, and asked humbly if Bebo could tell him where he was.

"In the deepest dungeon of King Gotintogs' castle whose daughter wanted you to drink. Truly mortals can talk much, and do little!"

"Can you tell me how to get out?" Zeman asked.

"No. I have only the power to talk to you about my mistress, and I have hard work to get back again to her, for Presto and Prestine are always trying to catch me."

"Are they the birds that I must kill?" Zeman asked.

"Yes, but you have many difficulties to get over

before that. Now good-bye," and the little voice ceased. Then Zeman groped round his dungeon to try and find an outlet, but in vain. He almost began to despair until he remembered the hairs that Alte had given him. He heard a sound, and saw a strange-looking creature advancing towards him, it seemed half fish, half human. It carried a light and something else.

"The high and mighty King Gotintogs commands you to drink this," the creature said hoarsely.

"I shall not," was the answer.

"I am to leave it here until to-morrow. If you have not drank it, the King will come himself and turn you into a hideous reptile."

The creature put down the light, and it seemed the very crystal cup that he had so nearly drank from before, and departed. How thirsty and weary he was, and this would refresh him. But, with an effort, he put the thoughts aside, and resolved to summons Alte, for he felt so awfully tempted to drink that delicious-looking stuff. So he burnt a hair by the light that the creature had brought, and Alte appeared.

"I am here. What do you want?" he asked.

"To get out of this place as quickly as I can. I have searched for an outlet but cannot find any. King Gotintogs commands me to drink, but I have refused. First give me food and water, for I am weary and tired. But I must break that cup and spill the contents," and he turned to do so, but, to his astonishment, it would not move. It was fastened so tightly on the ground.

"Let it alone," said Alte. He stamped, and a table of refreshments appeared, and Zeman ate heartily.

"Now, quick, say plainly what you want me to do for you, for King Gotintogs may come, and we are mortal enemies."

"I want to get out of this place."

"Very well. I can only take you a certain distance, and before you can leave the castle you will have to fight a dragon who guards it, and I have no power over him. You may ask one thing of me to help you. What shall it be?"

"A suit of armour."

"It will be of no use to you."

"A trusty sword."

"Better take my stick," and he held it forth, the emerald eyes of the monkey's head on the top of

it glittered strangely. "You will find it of more use than what you wanted. It will help you when you are tired, the emeralds will blind snakes that you may meet on your journey."

Zeman took the stick, and found himself at the entrance of the castle, only the wrong side. Alte had gone. There was the dragon, fierce and powerful. Zeman advanced towards it, and then the combat began in right earnest, blows being dealt out unsparingly by Zeman. At last, after terrible work, the creature was senseless, and he thought to get out without further trouble, but there, right in his path, was coiled a huge serpent, ready to spring on him, but it shrank away beneath the magic power of the emeralds—blinded.

And then Zeman trudged along, his staff proving quite a friend, for in some mysterious fashion it helped him. At last he came to a beautiful forest, and determined to sleep there, and so he found a nice tree, and laid down to rest.

CHAPTER II.

All at once he awoke with a start, for an icy cold finger was laid on his hand, and he beheld an old woman looking at him with very sharp eyes. She was ugly, with a shrivelled skin, the wrinkles crossing and recrossing each other in a very curious manner; her dress was ragged and old; and she seemed very weary. Zeman had a mother, who was also old, and although this ugly woman was not in the least like her, yet he felt pitiful for her weariness, and said cheerfully,—

"Good day, mother."

"Good day, indeed," quoth the old hag. "Yes, it has been a good day for you, to judge by your sleep; for your bones are young, mine are old, and I have a long way to go. If you really had any pity for me, you would help me up yonder hill."

Zeman looked in the direction she pointed out with her skinny finger, and wondered at its steepness and ruggedness. He wondered, too, if it led to Gamecrane's castle; but even if it did not, he thought that no one could blame him for helping a poor old woman up such a very steep hill as the one that arose before him, although she was certainly very ill-tempered,—an infirmity of age, perhaps, so he replied,—

"Oh yes, I'll help you, mother. Here, lean on my arm, and I must lean on my staff."

They commenced the ascent, but the old woman leaned so very heavily that Zeman's arm ached sadly, for she was so weary, the hill rose steeper than ever, and they did not appear to make any progress.

She did not seem to notice what a drag she was on her companion. At last he could not bear the pain any longer, so he said, as cheerfully as he could,—

"I think that you had better come the other side, mother, for my arm aches very much."

She did so, but they seemed no nearer the summit than when they first started, for the naked

hill, from which rough rocks jutted, rose high and gaunt before them with no resting place.

"Do you see that large rock yonder?" the old woman asked.

"Yes."

"When we reach the other side of that we will rest, and have some refreshment."

Zeman wondered where it was coming from, but replied,—

"Well, mother, I shall be glad for a drink of water, and something to eat, but I see nought but rocks and stones, and I have not brought anything with me, and you don't look as though you had."

"Never judge by appearances," the old woman said sagely, and she grinned, and showed several very unpleasant-looking yellow teeth. "I should have thought that you had begun to find that out by this time; but you are only like all the rest of them."

At last they were near the rock, but the hill was terribly steep just before they reached it, so that it was as much as Zeman could do to drag the old woman up, and when he at last succeeded, he fainted away. As soon as he came to himself, he glanced round in astonishment.

He was lying on a couch of soft moss, and, as far as he could see, rose huge stalagmites of crystal, the light falling on them from some unseen source made them glisten as though encrusted with jewels. In the distance he could see fair nymphs clothed in green, with wild flowers in their tresses. A rustle like the soft wind of summer filled the place. Zeman was bewildered, for all that he could remember was his last struggle up the hill with the old woman clinging to him; and where was she now?—She stood before him, still with her wrinkled face, but the expression was so mild and gentle, and when she smiled he saw no unclean teeth, but pure white ones. Her dress was different as well, so very beautiful—shimmering and soft like the opal. She carried a wand ornamented with opals like "pieces of rainbow under a cloud."

"You are tired with your trial," she said to Zeman. "Will you eat and drink?"

"Yes, fair lady; but, tell me, was it you whom I helped up the hill?"

"Yes. Now eat, and I will tell you more." So the fairy woodland nymphs brought fruit on golden dishes, and wine in golden cups.

"Now eat and drink, and my maidens shall sing and dance to you."

And so they glided through the fairy dance, and sang of the charms of a fair princess shut up in an enchanted castle, and of Zeman who had defeated the fishy monster, and who last, although not least, had surmounted the difficulties of the hill.

After Zeman had eaten, he was going to drink wine, but on taking the goblet, it flashed through his mind that he had seen it before. He examined it; yes, it was the one that the lady of the coral cave had presented to him. He threw it from him, but it righted itself, and remained on the ground. Then there arose a burst of jubulant music that resounded through the cave, such as he had never heard before, and he was conscious that he had really gained one victory.

"My son," said a sweet voice by his side, "you have done right."

"Give me water, for I thirst," cried Zeman, but before he could be supplied his attention was attracted by a beauteous female form, that glided between the massive pillars—she was so beautiful that it almost bewildered Zeman to look at her. Her dress was radiant, flashing and sparkling

with jewels, her golden hair floated about her shoulders. In her lily-white hand she carried a cup, totally unlike the one he had thrown away, and which had entirely disappeared to his intense astonishment. She approached Zeman, and knelt gracefully on one knee, and said, in soft liquid tones, with an admiring glance in her beautiful eyes,

"Drink, O Zeman the brave, the rescuer of the fair Hyremtha, and new life will fill your veins."

He took the cup and was going to drink amidst the intense silence of the fairy throng who had been just singing so triumphantly; but, on glancing at its content, he saw that the ruby-coloured fluid was not water, and, moreover, that the cup was the very one that he had erewhile cast from him.

He hesitated, for his mouth was dry and parched; he was even now so weary, and this would refresh him; his whole frame needed something to stimulate it. The silence was more profound than ever. The dulcet tones of the beautiful creature, still kneeling at his feet, again broke forth:—"Drink, O Zeman the brave!"

"Not this, but water!" he managed to say.

The beautiful lady at his feet turned to an old woman who mouthed and snarled at him in her fury, but, who, nevertheless, hurried away.

"Here is water," said the melodious voice of the wrinkled woman; and he drank eagerly.

"Who was that lady?" he asked.

"Yecra. A creature who does the bidding of Gamecrane on account of her jealousy of Hyremtha. He has given her the power of changing herself into any form she pleases. I have a certain power over Gamecrane, and it is this, the cup that has proved so fatal to all who began the quest before you, he can change to any form he pleases, but when you take it into your hands, it resumes its original one; that is the power that I possess, and that he cannot overcome."

"And who are you, fair lady?" Zeman again asked.

"I am Wathra; Hyremtha's grandmother; and I do all I can to help her knights by teaching them to help themselves. Now come with me; for I have three gifts at my disposal, one of which you can have."

So she took him into a little room, in which was a small window, and bade him look

through. He did so, and beheld a splendidly dressed throng of mortals. It seemed as though they were brimful of happiness. Joy beamed from the eye, pleasant words fell from the lips. He noted one pair—a lady and gentleman—seemingly absorbed with each other. At another part of the room two matrons sat in amiable chat; and he espied two female friends exchanging confidences with all the fondness of girlhood. And yet another pair attracted Zeman's notice—two young men, who stood arm-in-arm, talking to a beautiful lady, who, in answer to some remark of one of the gentlemen, pointed to an opposite corner. Thither Zeman looked, and did just notice a fair, patient face, but unattractive in that brilliantly-dressed crowd, whose jewels, satins, and costly attire, obscured her pure white dress, with its bouquet of forget-me-nots. Zeman somehow understood that she was the beautiful lady's poor cousin.

"Well," said the voice of Wathra, "what do you think of it all?"

"How happy they look—so happy that I almost envy them."

"Now look through these," and she gave him a pair of spectacles.

He did so, and started back in horror. He looked again. Could that be the same company? There were the satins, the jewels, the brilliant dresses and lights; but the countenances—the hearts—how different? Through his spectacles he again studied those who had before attracted his attention. The lovers' hearts were full of anything but love; for the lady wanted a husband to spite another lover who had slighted her. The gentleman wanted a rich wife; and Zeman shuddered as he saw the hideous vices of his heart, his secret sins, his impure thoughts, and unholy desires; and turned with mingled feelings to the two matrons who were so busily chatting. Here he was surprised again, for their hearts were full of jealousy one of the other, each pleasant word was barbed with hidden venom, their smiles hid sneers, and their compliments hid insults; and then he found out the two intimate friends, only to discover that both loved one man; and that both were determined to have him, if not by fair means, by foul, and to this end they told each other mythical secrets concerning what *he* said, and how *he* looked. With fear and misgiving, he turned to the two male friends, to find the tempter and tempted; he saw the subtle

design to draw the rich victim to ruin; the delicate flattery—the insidious suggestions—the obsequious attentions—the gradual turning all pure thoughts into impure ones. And then he searched for the beautiful lady, and found her seated by the side of the poor cousin; a gentleman was talking to them, and it was refreshing to find that his heart was very different to the others whom he had seen—that it was filled with noble purposes, nobly carried out, and, moreover, he discovered that he was in love with the poor cousin. Then he glanced at her, to be more charmed; for he found charity, patience, and a hope in something he had not found before. He knew that she had seen trouble of no common order and had passed through purified. And then he found a little seed that a mischievous urchin, called Cupid, had planted there, that would spread and grow never to die in this world. He lingered long over this last picture until reminded by Wathra that she had two other gifts at her disposal; the one was a mirror in which he could see anything he wanted; the other was an ear trumpet, and by placing it to his ear, he would hear anyone speak of whom he might be thinking.

"Which shall it be?" she asked.

"The spectacles."

"You have chosen wisely. Now go, your tempta tions will be many, but you have Alte's hairs and staff, and my spectacles. When in any doubt put on the spectacles."

And then, in some inexplicable manner, Zeman found himself at the beginning of a great plain, across which he had to go.

CHAPTER III.

He started across this wide plain and its length seemed interminable. A few stunted trees grew on it, and the ground was not hard to walk on. He went on for some hours, until, in the distance he fancied that he espied signs of some kind of inhabitants, feeble efforts at cultivation, attempts at building—seemingly left when half finished, as though the worker had suddenly been called away. But there was one cottage inhabited, and the garden was carefully cultivated, and smoke curled from the chimney. A bird was singing at the door, which stood invitingly open. As Zeman was very tired, he thought that he would ask for a rest. So he went to the door and peeped in, and beheld a beautiful young woman, busily spinning, and singing so musically, that Zeman paused to listen.

The burden of her song was of one who loved her, and had gone to seek his fortune, to return and share it with her; and still she kept on with her spinning. The cottage was beautifully clean, and looked so tempting that Zeman knocked. The girl started and came forward, as though expecting some one whom she knew, and it was not difficult to guess the one expected after hearing her song. The bright blush faded, and a shade of disappointment passed over her face as she saw the stranger.

"Will you let me rest, fair maiden? For I have walked many miles, and am very weary."

"Walk in, sir stranger; and you are welcome. I will get you refreshments directly."

Zeman entered; but saw only his fair hostess, who bore the name of Lulu. Everything in the place bore traces of her thrifty fingers and her dainty taste; for taste can be discerned even when the surroundings on which to expend it are very poor, its fairy touch is soon seen. To Zeman's relief she placed no fairy food before him, but real bread and substantials, just as he had had before he began his quest; and a feeling of regret passed through his mind that he had not more perseveringly tried for the realities of life, instead of the

unrealities. The feeling was transient, for the bird began to sing so deliciously, that it reminded him of Bebo, and also of the beauteous Hyremtha at the tender mercies of the monster Gamecrane, and seemed to fill him with fresh courage. It might have been the food that had refreshed him, but that we will leave.

"And where are your father and mother?" he asked curiously.

"Gone," replied Lulu, sadly, "and my brothers are gone, and all I love have left me. But they wanted me to go with them. I would rather stay at home. For they will all come back again some day, and will want rest," and her bright eyes filled with tears.

"And where have they all gone?"

"To a beautiful place they told me, where they can get gold in any quantities. But I am sad for them. I could tell them of a treasure here, but no, they think they will get more in the great palace, where it is said that gold is strewn about, and can be had for the picking up. But, after all, it is bought too dear."

"And what palace is it? for I should like to see it if it lies in my path," said Zeman.

"The palace of the great god Mammoneth. It is crowded with worshippers from the north, south, east, and west. I would entreat you not to go there, but as you are on your quest, your path is right through the palace. I have heard horrible tales of its devotees," and she shuddered at the remembrance.

"And have you no wish at all to go, although all you love are there?" Zeman asked in surprise.

"No, for I worship a greater god than Mammoneth."

As he was rather curious, he put on his spectacles, and the girl's heart was revealed to him; and he found there the same hope that he had seen in the poor cousin's.

"Can you direct me to the Palace?"

"You must go through it, as I told you before, there is no means of missing it, even if you tried, now you have undertaken the quest."

So he again plodded on, and by and by the Palace appeared in the distance, and as Zeman approached it, he wondered at its magnificence. It was lavishly ornamented with gold, the roof was supported by massive pillars of different coloured marbles. Its splendour was dazzling. Flights of steps led to several doors, and up

these steps a continual crowd of human beings were climbing, "some in rags, some in jags, and some in velvet gowns." Some crawling, others could only drag themselves step by step with the greatest difficulty, all for self, no pity for anyone, the young pushing aside the old, the old cursing and swearing at the young.

Ah! and Zeman saw a stealthy hand use the knife, then the assassin stepped over a bleeding body, blood on his feet, blood on his hands, and blood on his heart. Oftentimes it was more than one victim fell who stood in the devotee's way, who only thought of the great god whom he had come to worship. Well, Zeman went up the steps with the crowd, and more easily than the rest, it appeared to him, although he sometimes had a rough blow, or a curse, or sneer to bear. When he arrived at the top of the steps, he entered a vast hall, and discovered that passages led from it in every direction.

Curiosity prompted him to enter one, and to his astonishment he found himself in a dockyard. A goodly-looking ship was just about to sail with a precious cargo of human lives on board, besides what was of infinitely more value to some—the

heavily insured cargo. Tender partings were taking place between husband and wife, brother and sister, parents and children. And the captain was talking in a low voice to the owner. Zeman drew near and heard this,—

"Remember, this is the last voyage that I shall take in that ship. She is rotten, and you know it. Even now I am tempted not to go."

"Nonsense! you are nervous, captain. I expect you will make a quick pasage." Zeman used his spectacles and found the shipowner's heart nearly shrivelled up by his devotedness to Mammoneth: nay, he saw more, and that was the certain knowledge that the first storm would wreck that ship, loaded and rotten as it was. And there was no pity or remorse in his heart. The ship sailed to return no more. He came into the hall again, and then turned into another passage. This was short, and led into another hall. Strange-shaped bundles were lying about, some large, some small, others of very queer shapes indeed. Zeman wondered what they contained. Many people were there, but none noticed the other.

A beautiful woman first attracted his attention, she seemed so lovely, so gracious, and so winning,

he wondered what she did there, especially as the floor was wet with *blood.* Just in front of her there lay two or three bundles wrapped up carefully, not very large, but she had to step on them. Sometimes she glanced at them, but then turned away and again renewed her fascinations. Gold was poured into her lap in plenty, and yet she did not have enough. Again, Zeman put on his magic glasses and looked at her heart. Could it really be hers, filled with impurity, filthiness, trading her virtue for gold? And those bundles lying at her feet? Well, they were only a broken-hearted father's and mother's hearts, and the tender heart of a loving sister, and a little new-born baby, strangled by her—its mother. She had trodden them all underfoot, but her skirts were splashed with blood, unseen by her, but too plainly seen by Zeman.

Sick with horror he retraced his steps to be met by the crowd, some of whom flung their bundles out of the way; others reluctantly let them slip off, but they did slip.

Now and then he met one returning, seeking eagerly for a lost one, but in vain. And a wail of anguish would be wrung from a heart who had not

found the happiness expected from Mammoneth, and a mocking echo seemed to take up the refrain,—"Too Late!" And so Zeman went over this vast Palace: and he saw that the gifts of the god Mammoneth could be used without being abused but it was outside the Palace.

And then there were some of the devotees, whose hearts he read, very near their journey's end, who had been drawn on gradually from the outside to the inside of the Palace by the magic power of this wonderful god whose slaves they were; and who cast their all—wives, husbands, children, parents, honour, virtue, truth, love—these precious offerings at its feet, counting them nought compared with the mighty Mammoneth's favour. And there were others who, on the very verge of this Palace, turned back, although they had lost bundles containing treasures.

The fascinations, and allurements of the god would have overcome Zeman, when he looked on enchanting scenes of happiness—on the honour and homage gained—of the adulation, flattery, and fawning of many, but for his magic glasses, which revealed the hollowness of it all. Another strange thing he noticed was, that

all these devotees, whether male or female, dark or fair, black or white, who acknowledged Mammoneth as master, were all hastening in one direction; he wondered if they were conscious of it, but every passage that led from the central hall, every room, led to one point, and every creature in the place was going thence. Now and again a fairy hand would draw one back, and others would be clutched by a hand of iron, that drew the victim almost against his will. And yet again, a feeble, shaking hand would beckon to some devotee who was hurrying about with headlong speed, sometimes without avail, at others, successfully.

Zeman wondered where the journey of all these creatures ended; but soon found himself at the beginning of some stairs that led down, down, down, and although it was so dark and dismal, yet the crowd were hurrying down the steps. Some jostled others over, and with dreadful cries they fell and disappeared.

Where? He soon saw a glare, and suddenly there burst on his sight an awful view—a mass of human beings, writhing and twisting in horrible agony, yet, even then mocking and gibing at each other, fighting like demons for the mere sake of

it. And every minute or two a victim of his own folly would drop into the awful place, which rang with shrieks of despair and anguish, and Zeman was reminded of a story that he read—it seemed so long ago—in an old fashioned book, of a rich man who was tormented, and craved but a drop of water to cool his tongue in vain. When he glanced at the distorted faces, the glaring eyes, and heard the blasphemous language that seemed natural to the place—when he saw men there, who had had the power given them of saying no to the tempter—the lovely women who had trampled hearts under foot as though they were stones—he shuddered, and an intense feeling of thankfulness filled the heart, that, so far, he had escaped it, and then?

Well, he found himself in a small square room, with the door fast shut, and no visible means of opening it. How he came there he could not conceive, but there he was, he imagined, still in some part of the Palace. He thumped and knocked at the door, but it made no impression, he shouted until he could shout no longer, but no one came. All at once he thought that he would examine the room through his glasses; and was astonished at the transformation, and not a little alarmed also. In each corner of the

room, he saw a huge snake coiled, with forked tongue, ready to dart at him; and on a table, with everything to tempt the appetite, was the same goblet that he seemed fated to meet wherever he went, and on the table was a card, on which he read: "Drink or Die!"

Strange that Zeman felt parched with thirst, the air was hot, and particles of dust floated about, and almost choked him; his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. With a desperate effort, he charged at one of the snakes that was beginning to show signs of antagonism. He struck it with the staff that Alte had given him, and it fell dead. With fresh courage he turned to another, which most dexterously avoided Zeman's blows; suddenly he turned the emerald eyes on the snake, blinded it, and then killed it. But he was too weary to attempt the other two. And again his eyes fell on the cup. His strength was nearly gone. Die, he must, whether he drank or not; the cup was at his lips; but hark!—with a crash it fell to the ground, for a bird was singing so mournfully of a lady who was hoping to be released, and who was doomed to disappointment.

"Is that you, Bebo?" he asked huskily. "Help

me!" There was the tiny bird perched up high above him, singing its mournful ditty.

"I can't come down, for those snakes will devour me. O! my poor mistress, will she never get out?"

"Yes, if I can help her," Zeman returned, in a choking voice; for again that horrible thirst was overcoming him, and there still stood the cup that had seemed dashed to atoms.

"Burn a hair," said the bird, and flew away; for the hideous snakes were arousing themselves ready to attack it. He burnt one, and Alte appeared immediately.

"Well, what is it now?"

"Get me out of this place and let me rest."

"You have earned your rest, and shall have it," and in a twinkle they found themselves once again outside the Palace, and in—it seemed to Zeman—the especial abode of Alte.

It was a very curious place, and all sorts of odd things were hung on its walls—the skin of a small snake—a tiger's claws—some bits of hair that looked very like a woman's—strings of pearls—queer-looking sticks—old-fashioned mirrors, all shown out with startling distinctness by the light

of one lamp that was suspended from the ceiling, and the ceiling sparkled and glittered, and flashed and shone beautifully. Zeman found that it was composed of rock, and it seemed full of precious stones.

"Are they real?" he asked Alte.

"What?"

"Those jewels."

Alte laughed. "Yes, but what are they worth? Mammoneth's devotees worship for them. Come, eat. You will see plenty of such things down here." When he had finished his meal and was refreshed, Alte said:—"The time has come for you to see the fair Hyremtha. Have you any desire?"

"Oh yes! I long to see her."

He took down one of the old-fashioned mirrors, and bade him look in. He did so, and beheld a splendidly furnished room, and on one of the couches a beautiful woman sat; but there was something very different in her beauty to what he had seen before, it was so pure, and there was so much sadness in the dark eyes. She appeared to be listening for something. Then she arose and opened the window. Bebo flew in panting and nearly exhausted. She soothed and caressed, and

afterwards fed it, talking in low tones to it, until it was refreshed.

"What does she say?" Zeman asked.

Alte placed a horn to his ear, and then he heard her say—"Have you seen him, Bebo?"

"Yes, and saved him once again. Gamecrane nearly succeeded this time."

"Poor Zeman!" she murmured softly.

"Do you think he will come?" she again asked, so anxiously that Zeman vowed that he would.

"I can't tell," the bird replied, mournfully, "Gamecrane is so angry, and Presto and Prestine are so hungry, that I am very much afraid he never will."

"Has he Alte's hairs?"

"Yes, but he is brave, and forgets to use them. Why, he was just going to drink; for Gamecrane made the air so hot, and the dust flew about, and he was nearly dying with thirst, when I stopped him."

"Poor Zeman," the lady again sighed.

"Poor Hyremtha," Zeman echoed.

The scene disappeared, and Alte said,

"Now listen. Gamecrane has only two more visits to pay her, and then if she will not be his,

he can turn her to stone. Her grandmother, Wathra, counsels her what to do. Now he has to bring her three golden apples that are to be found on a certain tree in the forest through which you will have to pass. He cannot go so quickly unless he can take her the apples. If you can get them it will delay his visit, besides assisting you, for they are magic apples. If you happened to meet Gamecrane, and threw one at him, it would drive him away. When you want me in any emergency, you know how to summon me."

CHAPTER IV.

TREES, trees, trees, nothing but trees now met Zeman's wondering eyes—trees of every kind, apple, pear, elm, oak, fir, beech, palm, birch, elder, the variety seemed interminable, and he wondered however he was to find the three golden apples amidst such a medley. But find them he would; for his quest had a fresh impetus now that he had seen the beautiful Hyremtha, and he resolved that the mournful light in her eyes should soon be changed to love-light when he had rescued her; and unconsciously, in the gladness of his heart, he burst out singing. The birds listened in wonder; four-footed creatures peeped from their haunts, even the very leaves on the trees seemed to quiver at the unusual sounds, but still he sang on joyously, tramping along right willingly. Still trees were everywhere, there

seemed no end to them. Although he sang, yet he used his eyes at the same time as his voice. Suddenly he stopped, for he fancied that he heard a groan, and he hastened forward. The groans were louder, and then he saw, lying at the foot of a tree, a young man, with blood-stained clothing, dishevelled hair, and blood slowly trickling from a wound in his head.

Zeman thought he was dead, and somehow he knew that this young man was also in search of the fair Hyremtha, and a jealous pang shot through his heart; but he could not help pitying him, for he seemed so unfortunate, and, despite his forlorn condition, was very handsome. So Zeman tried to restore him to consciousness, for he found that he was still alive. He searched for water, but could find none. Then he resolved to summons Alte once again, for he could not leave the stranger to die, even although he might prove his rival. So he burnt another hair, and Alte appeared again.

"You have been quick this time," he remarked. "What is it now?"

"Restore this stranger," Zeman hastily commanded.

"But he is a rival," quoth Alte.

"True, but the cause of humanity will not let me see a brother die."

Still, although he said these words, there was a strange feeling at his heart. Suppose he did let him die, who would be the wiser? Then he need fear no rival. But a thought of his mother flashed through his mind, and he seemed faintly to hear her voice blessing him, and enjoining him always to look at a little amulet when he was tempted to do wrong that she had given to him. So he opened the little locket, in shape like a book, made of pure gold, and which had been an heirloom in his family for many, many generations, and read this—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye to them." Then he was decided. "Give me something to restore him."

"Very well, but he cannot live long. Talk to him, and heed well his words, for he may help you in your search for the apples. I can do no more now."

The stranger was soon conscious, and sat up, thanking Zeman for his kindness.

"Do you feel better?" he asked.

"Yes, but I shall die; Garmecrane has wounded me mortally. And so you are in search of the fair Hyremtha?"

"Yes."

"And so was I, and I am punished. Let me tell you while I can. I loved some one fairer to me than Hyremtha; and I determined to go to the castle of Mammoneth to better my fortunes. Lulu tried to persuade me not; for, she told me, that she could point out treasure at home, but I would not heed her words. While on my journey I heard of the fair lady, but I loved my Lulu, and thought that others might rescue her. Then I reached the Palace, and entered the passage wet with blood, but I did not know it was blood, then on I went so eager to serve Mammoneth. And then one came to me and whispered that if I gave up my love, wealth, honour, and riches would be mine; but my love and my heart must be offered to Mammoneth. So I wrapped them up in a wrapper of ambition and stepped over them, and began my quest. The same one told me of three golden apples that must be found, and of their virtues. One thrown at Game-crane will disable him for a time, and him you will surely meet with before you get out of this forest. The other contains deadly poison; and in the third, when it is broken open, you will find a rope ladder."

"But how can one find them amidst so many trees?" Zeman asked.

"The tree is very old, no birds rest on it, and no animals go near it. The trunk is very slippery, and the apples are at the top. And now let me die. But Oh, that I might see my Lulu once again in the little cottage where she is spinning and singing, expecting my return!"

A great pity filled Zeman's heart, and a short sharp struggle took place there. But the words on his amulet again returned to his mind, and pity triumphed. He burnt another of his precious hairs, and that was the fourth, you must remember.

"Well, what is it now?"

"Can you take us to Lulu's home?" he asked.

"Yes, but is that all you have burnt your fourth hair for?"

"Yes, and can you bring me back again to this place after I have seen him there?"

"Yes. Shut your eyes. Now open them."

To Zeman's surprise they were in the dainty cottage where he had supped before he had reached the Palace of Mammoneth. And there was Lulu still patiently spinning, and hopefully singing,

keeping a home for her loved ones. She wept over her restored lover, and then she put by her tears, and attended to him. Well, he died, but not until she had shown, and shared with him, her treasure, so that, weary and worn as he was, still he was happy. And then she went on with her spinning, but not with her singing, and threads of gold appeared in it, and threads of silver in her hair. Many a poor wayfarer who had been to the Palace of Mammoneth, who had parted with his precious bundles never to find them again, who had been drawn from the mighty king's dominions by the shadowy hand or the grip of iron, whose skirts were sprinkled with blood, found the true treasure by that young girl's teachings in the cottage.

Again Zeman found himself in the forest with Alte by his side; and, said that strange creature, "I have it in my power to place you at the foot of the tree on which are the apples, because you pitied your rival, and did not hesitate to *do* as well as to think. Generosity always brings its reward." And he was gone.

There stood the tree, gaunt and bare, the trunk shining and smooth, at the top a mass of foliage, amidst it, the golden apples. He paused

before it, but it seemed an impossibility to climb that bare, smooth trunk. All at once, a mocking laugh rang in his ears—a cruel exultant laugh—a laugh that set the blood boiling in his veins, and made him determined to get them or die. Still he stood there, pondering deeply how he could get to the top of the tree. Again the laugh rang through the forest. Suddenly Zeman bethought him of his spectacles, and drew them forth, determined to see how the tree looked through them. Now there was a change, for he could see steps cut in the bark, by which he could climb, and then he shouted joyously "Hyremtha, for ever!" and began to mount.

The first part was exceedingly difficult; twice he slipped and fell, but the third time he managed better, and it was astonishing how easily he ascended the higher he went. On the top he could see the apples shining in all their beauty. One by one, he plucked them, and put them in his wallet. Then again he raised his voice, this time in defiance— "Death to the enemies of the fair Hyremtha!" But no mocking laugh was heard now, all was quiet.

Then he trudged along again, and gradually the trees lessened in number, until he came to a valley without a tree in it; he went rapidly down the hill,

to be confronted by a hideous-looking creature. He was tall and big, with glaring eyes, and large white teeth that seemed to Zeman ready to bite him. His hair hung down his back, looking like so many little black snakes that twirled and darted about. The nails of his hands were so long and pointed that they served for weapons; fire darted from his nostrils; his armour was made of alligators' scales. Altogether he was an object to inspire anyone with terror, and Zeman felt it mastering and almost paralyzing him. But with a tremendous effort he aroused himself as that cruel laugh again rang forth, and the creature said in mocking tones,—"Haste on, O Zeman the brave; for the fair Hyremtha and I want your blood to drink at our wedding feast, your dainty flesh for our marriage supper, and then our minstrels shall sing of the brave Zeman who presumed to make himself the rival of the high and mighty Gamecrane!" and he laughed tauntingly.

Zeman clenched his teeth, and braced himself up for battle; he was brave and obstinate. He did not want to use his apple at once, for he longed to belabour his antagonist first; so he advanced, swinging his staff, but Gamecrane was

ready, and darted on one side, and nearly gave him a very ugly blow. Long and hard the battle raged, now for Zeman, now for the monster, whose roars of baffled rage were dreadful to hear. But Zeman was getting weak and faint, then he managed to draw forth his apple, and hurled it at Gamecrane, who retired howling with rage and pain, then Zeman sank to the ground exhausted, and ready to die.

He did not know how long he laid there; but, when he opened his eyes, he seemed in such a delicious state he did not care to move. A gentle looking being moved softly about a pleasant looking place, and Zeman closed his eyes again, for the very air seemed peace. But he was aroused by the stranger bending over him.

"Are you better?" he asked.

"Yes, thank you. But how came I here?"

"One of our messengers on his travels brought you, and you were sorely wounded and nearly dead."

"And where am I now?" he asked curiously, and, on further noticing his attendant, he observed a light at his breast; it was a very peculiar light, and did not seem to possess the property of burning; but it sparkled and flashed marvellously, like a

large jewel. The stranger divined his thought as he saw him look so curiously at the light and said,—

"This light is the symbol of the kingdom to which I belong; but for it you would have been left to die. All who wear this badge are our King's special subjects, for him we work, and he rewards us. Before you leave us, you will see some of the beauty of our service. Perhaps you may also win the badge. Nay," he continued, as he saw Zeman's gesture of dissent, "but it is a part of your travels, just as your visit to Mammoneth's Palace was, so you must go through our King's dominions. It is small when it is compared with the kingdom of Mammoneth, but eventually it will absorb all in itself."

So Zeman went forth with his guide Stefano, and passed very quickly through various scenes—among thousands who did not care for their visits—and everywhere he saw the shining lights in the midst of squalor, where, in some mysterious manner, they brought peace. These lights had the property of creating other lights, sometimes they burnt most brilliantly, even eclipsing the light from whence they came, and then went out

suddenly. And a murmur of pity would escape the watchers, for too often there was a hasty rush to the Palace of Mammoneth—a common pathway up the steps—a trampling in blood, a reckless casting away of precious bundles, now regarded as encumbrances, and finally that dreadful plunge into the seething abyss; but at each step to the Palace Zeman still saw the shadowy hands, and he knew that they belonged to the owners of those lights.

And now he beheld a field of battle, he—

> Heard the sound of many trumpets,
> In a warlike march draw nigh.

Then the battle raged fiercely and savagely, for the spirit of war seized upon the men, and recklessness passed for courage, the dreadful passion to spill human blood intoxicated them, and they were ready to do anything their leaders commanded.

Night closed, the carnage was stayed, and as Stefano and Zeman hovered over the field of the dead, groans were wafted to their ears; but here he saw the lights again, in the midst of blood, burning as purely and steadily as ever. Groans turned to thanks for guidance to a happy

land, where no hope could be found here. Anguish for the loss of friendless dear ones turned to a mighty faith in the Lord whom those messengers loved to serve: wounds bound up, cordials given to friend and enemy alike. But Zeman fancied that there was a slight difference in some of the lights, those like Stefano's were pure and colourless, but he noticed that some were rather blue, and fancied that where they seemed to minister, the groans were not hushed, and sometimes they turned to a shriek of anguish, and then all was silent. So he put on his spectacles and found that the blue lights were counterfeit, and that they really belonged to the Palace of Mammoneth.

"Let us go," Zeman said sadly, "everywhere I find evil, even where I only expect good."

"So you will," returned Stefano, "Good and evil are near acquaintances. Where there is one, there will be the other, and one will influence the other, so that there is a continual battle going on for the mastery. Look at any of our fraternity with your spectacles, and you will see that my words are true."

He did so, and there he found side by side the two motive powers, each under the superintendence

of a higher one. Now one seemed likely to influence every action, now the other, and so the lights burned dimly or brightly as one or the other power was in the ascendancy. At times the struggles were very fierce; but, for the asking, there was always help for either.

Such was the obstinacy, or wilful blindness, that, too often, the help was ignored. In very rare cases, he found the light always burning brightly, and then the owner was a dependent creature who humbly asked help of the King of the beautiful country, and had it. He saw the lights in the breasts of warriors who were stern and inflexible in their duty; and then he knew the owners of those iron hands, who clutched with such power the devotees of Mammoneth, had dragged them from misery, in some cases even then in vain, for the victim wriggled back again to the Palace. He saw it in cherubs who often succeeded in lighting brilliant and lasting lights, where other messengers failed. All about the busy world he found them and their counterfeits. He looked for the source of these latter, and found that the oil was the poison of asps—that it was a cloak for all manner of wickedness, and again his heart felt very sad.

Then he had a glimpse of a certain cottage, where a maiden sat spinning, and there he found the light very brilliant, and he saw a feeble old man crawl to the house, so ragged, so dirty, so broken-hearted, and ready to die; and he heard the maiden say—"So you have come again, my father." Then did she rejoice, and another received the light; and Lulu once again resumed her spinning and singing, for two of those whom she so dearly loved had returned to share her treasure, and how could she mourn?

CHAPTER V.

But now Zeman had left these dominions, whose subjects carried the lights; and his way led over steep hills, down into deep valleys, across rivers, through forests. He had just reached a river that he had to cross, when from the other side he heard screams of anguish. He crossed over, and still heard the cries, and he rushed in the direction from whence they came. All at once they ceased, still he hastened on. Then he saw a beautiful lady lying on the ground, and his heart throbbed with joy, for it was Hyremtha, he told himself. How she came there he could not imagine. He knelt by her side, and bathed her face and hands, calling on her as his fair Hyremtha to wake again. But the beautiful hands hung down listlessly, and the eyes remained closed. Then he ventured, with heart

flutterings, to touch the lovely hands, and that seemed to bring her to life again. A soft sigh escaped her, and the colour returned to her face. She sat up, and, glancing wildly round, exclaimed,—

"Where is he? O save me! where is that dreadful Gamecrane?" and in her terror she clung to Zeman.

"Gone, fair lady, calm yourself, I am Zeman your slave, searching for you, and now the desire of my heart is gratified. How came you to get out of the Castle?"

"Are you really Zeman?" she asked shyly, and she toyed with a little ring on her finger, and Zeman felt a delicious thrill pass over him. The lady's eyes were so beautiful, and said so much that he wanted to read there, that he felt intoxicated with a delirious kind of love. So he sat by her side, and passed his arm round her slender waist; she coyly drew back, but did not move away. Still she played with her ring; her beauty more and more entrancing him, it was so voluptuous.

"Tell me how you came in the power of Gamecrane, my fair one?"

"He came while I slept, and carried me away."

"But I thought he could not come near you for some time, owing to the apple I threw at him."

"Ah! my poor Zeman, you don't know everything. Wathra, my grandmother, was away, and my dear little bird is ill, and he managed it somehow."

"Why did he leave you just now then?"

"Because he knew that you were coming. But never mind that, now you have your Hyremtha. Now come, and we will go to grandmother's house that she has given us, and we will be happy, and have no more troubles."

Her eloquent eyes confirmed what the dulcet tones said, and Zeman felt very bold.

"Show me the way, my beautiful one."

So she led him, clinging to him, and more and more intoxicating him with her glances; her eyes flashed and glowed, and darted beams of love upon him. Turning into an avenue of trees they wandered on and on, until in the distance a splendid mansion of black marble appeared, and over it seemed growing a vine of gold, on which were luscious bunches of grapes. Little elves were crushing the juice into cups; others presenting them to lovely women and handsome men, whose attire was not all that modesty could desire; but it was hardly

enough to alarm any one unless they had Zeman's spectacles; but he was too charmed with his Hyremtha to think of them now. They passed through the grand entrance and Zeman saw none but themselves. The elves seemed to nod and wink saucily, and a faint rustle seemed almost to sway the luscious fruit as Zeman and his lovely companion entered. The interior was chaste, save two or three pictures, and those, as Zeman was blind, he did not see.

"Sit down and rest your weary limbs, my Zeman. But change your dress first, you will find everything in that room."

He soon donned a handsome suit, and was about to return to the room he had left when he fancied he heard a soft voice say,—"Where are your spectacles?"

"True, I had nearly forgotten," he muttered. Thus reminded he did not forget his hairs and apples, although he had been in great danger of doing so. Then he returned to his Hyremtha, and found her awaiting him, clad in a splendid dress of many colours, rubies on her wrists, fingers, ears, and on her alabaster neck. A table was loaded with every delicacy, not forgetting wines. Slaves

waited on them; a delicious perfume filled the room; soft strains of music from invisible musicians entranced him with pure harmony, and, to crown all, he had his Hyremtha. The slaves waited on them, obeying the slightest sign of their fair mistress. Zeman looked about the table, but could not see what he wanted.

"What is it, dearest?" the lady asked tenderly. "Wine?—bring wine for your master," and a dozen golden cups were brought to him, containing as many different wines.

"No, thank you. I will take water."

"You may all go," the lady commanded imperiously, and a slight frown wrinkled her brow.

The slaves disappeared.

"What is the matter?" Zeman asked anxiously. Still she pouted, but looked so bewitching that he kissed her passionately.

"No, you don't love me," she murmured, "for you will not even drink to our mutual happiness. Come now," she resumed, coaxingly, "I will mix you a cup that the gods loved, and you shall drink my health; and then you may ask anything of me, and you shall have it."

"Do you mean that?" he asked, eagerly.

"Yes," and she cast a side glance and looked down.

Then she set about her work, now pouring from one decanter, now another, looking like a beautiful tropical bird amidst that splendour, her rubies burning and flashing, her dress shining. The music seemed more harmonious than ever; sweeter perfumes filled the air; he was in an intoxicating atmosphere, and was ready to do and dare anything for his fair lady. Still she went flitting about, blending the ingredients for the delicious draught that she had promised him. Her eyes glowed and burned and sparkled even as her rubies, as she poured the last ingredient into the richly-chased golden cup. Then she brought it to him.

"Let me hold it to your lips," she pleaded.

"Nay, I am the slave," and he took it from her hands, and had it to his lips, when again a large stone fell from invisible hands, and dashed it from his lips, but it was not broken, for it was the same goblet that he had seen so often before. And now claps of thunder almost deafened him, and loud crashes and explosions filled the air, the wind roared, and the rain dashed down, that Zeman was quite bewildered. But he did not forget Hyremtha

He could not find her anywhere. Instead of the beautiful room he found himself in a filthy, loathsome place, and shiny toads, and hideous reptiles crawled about; worrying flies stung, and bit, and tormented him. Bats flapped against his face whose wings had a deathly coldness; snarls of animals greeted his ears, making his blood run cold with fear. Round about him, in the darkness, seemed to float mocking faces that mouthed and grinned at him, their skinny fingers beckoning him, so that he was well nigh mad. In vain he hid his face in his hands, the flap of a deathly cold wind made him withdraw them, or a sharp sting irritated him almost beyond endurance.

For a long time he tried to get out but could find no means. At last he groped across a narrow passage, and he crawled through; now in the distance he saw a glimmer of light. When he arrived where the lamps burned, he saw an inscription on the wall, and it read thus—" Entrance to King Aholic's Castle."

Zeman paused in consternation, for he did not want to see any more castles or palaces, he wanted only to find Hyremtha. But there was no other way to go than through the castle that he could find, so

he reflected that, possibly, as there was no other means of exit from the splendid place that he and Hyremtha had occupied for so short a time, she might have fled into the castle in her terror.

He went along the passage and found himself in a place in which he could see some of the king Aholic's subjects' pursuits. And truly he was astonished. Many enchanting scenes met his view of radiant loveliness, noble genius, benevolence, love, all acknowledging this King's power. He saw the secret, slavish worship, when homage was paid in the chamber, and the devotee went into the world carefully hiding his secret. He even saw some of those luminous lights bow to it, and the lights became dim, and were finally extinguished. Even the worshippers of Mammoneth sometimes turned fickle to their god, and worshipped this one. He saw halls of revelry filled with thousands paying more or less homage; but all were going in one direction, like Mammoneth's devotees, some quickly, others taking it in an easy jog-trot fashion. Others, yet again, were racing swiftly along, distancing many competitors who had started long before, and had not seemed in so much hurry; nevertheless they were surely being drawn by the King's

wonderful magnet that influenced all of his subjects in a more or less degree. And then he found himself in places of worship, where the King's priests officiated, clad in gorgeous dresses, and they comforted the weary, and made the sad to laugh, the aged seemed to have their young life renewed, ragged dresses were changed to gay ones.

Zeman thought these places very enchanting, surely he should find his Hyremtha here; but no, he could not. Then he found himself hurried on into another part of the castle. Here again were gathered the crowd—the aged, the young, the rich, the poor, ugly, pretty, black, white, bond and free. He saw written up in large characters,—"The Hall of Rewards." About this spacious hall, clinging to the pillars, floating in the air, in every crook and cranny, were hobgoblins who grinned and twisted their skinny fingers, and rolled their eyes and tumbled about in infinite glee. Zeman shuddered, for he remembered the place that he had not long before left. Suddenly, each little imp settled on the shoulder of one of the crowd, where they grinned and twitched their victims' hair, or poked a finger in their eye, or inspected the inside of the mouth, or made a scratch and sucked some of the blood, or

a hole in the head and tasted some brains; indeed, there was no end to their mischief. Most of them had a great fancy for blood, and devised many curious methods of getting it, without exhausting the stock too soon.

Then he found himself moving on with the throng through a narrow passage, to emerge into another place of worship more magnificent than the former. Here, the crowd seemed to have abandoned itself to every species of insane mirth, there was a change in the faces too, and each one was attended by his little demon, who still poked, and scratched, and sucked with no abatement of glee and enjoyment. The priests glided through the throng, and their path was marked by an increase in the revelry. And in some places the hag Neashame flaunted about with impunity. Zeman felt sick and weary of it all, and asked himself—Could he find Hyremtha here—here where Neashame was beginning to be mistress of the ceremonies?

Then he bethought himself of his spectacles, and put them on only to take them off in horror and look round the place; it was just the same as before. Slowly he replaced them, feeling his flesh creep at the horrid spectacle that met his view; for in the

breast of everyone of that crowd, he saw a raging fire, hidden beneath broad cloth, silken bodice, rags, talent, genius, there they burnt, consuming everything, and continually requiring more fuel. Here the little demons presided, raking and stirring the fires so that they burnt fiercely, and again the little imps poked, and scratched, and sucked in fiendish merriment. But even in this place, he saw those beautiful lights burning as purely as ever, and actually subduing the raging fires, although it was terrible work, the fires were so deeply planted, and so inextinguishable; still, such was the marvellous power of these lights that many fires ceased to burn, and the pure flame was seen instead, and the little demon who had presided there was driven away never to return.

CHAPTER VI.

But the crowd were still moving, and Zeman found himself floating in the air above it, many were rushing pell-mell up a flight of steps; and he saw many before they reached the top, tumble over, and they went down, down, down, even as the devotees of Mammoneth had done. But a few went on, and reached the top, and these few were the especial objects of the little demons' care, although they had to poke, and scratch, and suck harder than ever to get blood now, for the stock was nearly exhausted. Yet there was no abatement of fiendish glee, on the contrary it increased, and oftentimes the little demon had a fellow imp for a companion. Zeman saw that these few were privileged worshippers, and they were even now about to pay their homage to King Aholic himself.

They entered the throne room, and beheld his majesty surrounded by his attendants. Each of his devotees had his offering for the King carefully tied in a compact bundle, that did not, however, seem to contain so very much. First, one was laid on the altar--curiously Zeman examined it:—a small shrivelled thing, crushed and mangled, almost shapeless; by its side lay two or three smaller ones, also dried and withered. He could not understand what they were, until he put on his spectacles again. Well, he found that the shrivelled things were human hearts, rendered shapeless by the devotee, who had given them to the little demons as well as his own. He saw that these hearts were shrivelled, and dried, and crushed, and mangled while life was in them; and a thrill of horror ran over him, when he imagined the agony that had so altered their aspect. Said a loud voice—"We accept thy offering; it is nearly priceless, and verily thou shalt have thy reward!" And he was taken out never more to return—and a grim voice seemed to echo through the place—"Never more!" One after another brought their sacrifices, and then each went through a door behind the throne; but on glancing at the

floor of the room, he saw a moving mass, which he discovered were less privileged worshippers, who, rather than forego their reward, crawled on their bellies, and shuffled along, and clutched and clawed at each other, until they reached the door behind the throne, and then Zeman saw the sea of fire—the horrible serpents writhing and fastening on those wretched creatures—he heard the unearthly yells that arose from that place, he saw the little devils renew their poking, scratching, and sucking, and a question thrust itself in his mind:—"When would the torments end?" And again that voice seemed to echo through the place, those creatures yelled it forth in torment, the imps in fiendish delight, even the flames seemed to crackle and burn fiercer as the answer arose, "Never more!" And Zeman fainted.

When he again opened his eyes, he heaved a deep sigh of relief, for he was resting in a crystal cave, so calm and quiet that it hardly seemed possible, it was so short a time since he had witnessed such horrible scenes. Then he remembered Stefano's words, how near, yet how widely separate are the two great powers—good and evil; and he sighed again, for the evil seemed to predominate

to such a degree over the good. Was there no rest —nothing but fightings—the putting down of one power or the other—the miserable humiliation—the brief triumph, to be quenched in despair.

"My son," said a silvery voice, "you will find in too many hearts a little image, set on a shrine, and not until it is broken can one find peace. It even governs Mammoneth's worshippers, and Aholic's subjects—the subjugation, the love, the slavish worship, all are dictated by this little image."

Zeman turned in surprise at the voice, and beheld Wathra, in her shining dress, and her opal-studded sceptre in her hand. The wrinkles were still there, but the countenance was beautiful.

"And the name of this image?" he asked.

"Self. Remember your mother's amulet. Self falls from its shrine under the magic of its power. But it often rises again, and returns to its former place; and will return to life when you think it is dead. And, my son, have you seen Hyremtha?"

"Yes, but in the twinkling of an eye she was gone."

"Ah! my son, that was not Hyremtha. Do you think that she would tempt you to ruin—would

doom you to the torments of those demons that you saw?"

"But she was like her, and so exquisitely beautiful, that I am more than ever resolved to find her."

"Did you examine her through your spectacles?"

"No."

"Would you like to see her again?"

"Yes, O yes!" A mist arose from the ground after Wathra had waved her wand thrice over it. When it cleared he again saw the room at the enchanted castle. Hyremtha reclined on the sofa looking weary, hopeless, and yet beautiful. How different to the false Hyremtha; the eyes so pure, the mouth bespeaking patience and gentleness under suffering. How could he have taken the other maiden with her glances of unholy love, her suggestions, her intoxicating beauty, for this one. Her little bird was perched on her finger. Zeman listened, and heard her say,—

"How long he is coming."

"We must hope a little longer, my dear mistress. He is brave, and, perhaps, will soon be here."

"But Yecra tells me that he loves someone else; and how can he come, if he does?"

"Don't believe Yecra, my mistress. You know

that Gamecrane is her master, and she does just what he tells her."

"Yes, Bebo, but Yecra says that Zeman loves *her*, and told her so."

"But he thought it was you. She mixed him a cup of nectar, and he was really going to drink it, because he thought you were giving it to him, but I dashed it from his lips."

"My good Bebo," she said, gratefully caressing the little creature.

The scene faded, and Zeman felt deeply humiliated.

"How am I to tell the false from the true," he ejaculated dismally. "When I see beauty and goodness, am I not to believe it?"

"If it stands the test of your spectacles—they never fail; but, my son, passion made you forget to use them—nay, you would have lost them entirely, but for me, when you changed your dress. What strange beings mortals are. We put a power into your hands, tell you how to use it, guard your footsteps so far as we can, and yet you go on your course recklessly, and will not use your powers unless compelled by trouble. But now you must rest and refresh yourself,

and then on again, for Gamecrane will soon be about, and he is your bitter enemy, but courage and a true heart will carry you through with your numerous helps. Success lies before you if you are only careful."

CHAPTER VII.

SOME time after Zeman found himself in the midst of the beauties of nature. Around him, growing luxuriantly, were richly scented flowers, giant trees, fairy glades, silvery streams that murmured and trickled, and sparkled, and flashed back the rays of the sun. He caught glimpses of tiny cottages embowered in flowers, through the open windows of which he saw beautiful maidens; and wandering in the verdant lanes he met swains with their nymphs. The only duty in that enchanting country seems to love and to be loved. Many a bashfully intreating look was cast on him by beauteous eyes, but on he went, resolved not to be tempted again; and the remembrance of Hyremtha's sadness urged him on. He thought he saw her sitting sad and still under a tree, with her lovely

hair hanging dishevelled about her. She looked at him so sorrowfully; but he put on his spectacles and saw that she was the treacherous Yecra, the sight of whose wicked heart made him shudder.

"Begone, you loathsome creature," he exclaimed passionately; and then she spat at him, and railed and taunted him. Her eyes glared with rage as she told him that he should never see Hyremtha. But he hastened on, and would not heed her railings, and she dared not follow. He drew a deep breath of thankfulness; for here was one temptation resisted.

Now the whole aspect of the country changed, bare rocks, and bleak barren mountains arose on every side. Dark-looking gorges were at his feet, from the bottom of which he could just catch the sound of the angry water that seemed to lash itself into a rage at its dreariness. Huge vultures flapped about; hoarse cries resounded from the creatures that peeped at him from their dens and caves. Still he went steadily on, using the staff that Alte had given him to good purpose, for large shining snakes shrank from the sight of those emerald eyes, and hastily wriggled away. At last he came to what appeared to be an inland sea, whose waves dashed sullenly on the shore. Its inky waters

seemed to hide hideous things within it; huge billows agitated its bosom like waves of sullen passion, and an icy wind blew across that bore to his ears the sound of mocking laughter, and yells of derision. And Zeman stood alone on that dismal shore—not knowing what to do. Behind him arose the great black mountains, shutting him in; fronting him the sea that he must cross before he could rescue Hyremtha. No boat near, and no one to help him; so he burnt the fifth hair, and Alte again stood by his side.

"I am obliged to call on you to help me again, my friend. I want a boat to cross that sea; and I want to know what I shall find on the other side."

"Gamecrane's castle, in which is Hyremtha."

"So near?" Zeman asked delightedly.

"Yes, and yet so far," Alte returned laconically. "But here comes the boat." Sure enough there it was, riding on the billows like a thing of life, but there was no one in it.

Said Alte, "You will find all you want inside; now, listen, you will be surrounded by enemies as soon as you touch yonder island. Presto and Prestine are monarchs there, and if they catch sight of you will hunt you to death."

So Zeman stepped into the boat, and Alte again disappeared. The boat shot from the shore. A keen air cut Zeman's face; and the wind seemed full of mischief, whirling around him, dashing the inky water after him, and raising huge billows, on the top of which the boat rode, and then it seemed as though it must be swallowed up in a deep trough, still it went on. Out of the midst of the water rose a rocky, desolate-looking island; and on the top of a mountain was a strong castle, whose strength seemed to defy time and the elements. And he knew that it was the place in which he should find his fair one, and his heart gave a bound as he gave his rallying cry,—"Death to the enemies of the fair Hyremtha!"

The echoes took it up mockingly, and again and again he heard his cry repeated. And yet again he sent it forth defiantly, as he neared the shore. And then he saw a venerable figure awaiting his coming. But, although venerable,he was rather an odd looking one. He was not tall, and had long white flowing hair and beard. His eyes sparkled remarkably for one so aged as he. He was clad in a robe of green.

"Welcome, my son," he exclaimed, "the one that

my eyes have so longed to behold. Thou art home at last, thou who has surmounted a thousand perils, thou, the deliverer of my child Hyremtha. Thy lusty shouts were music in mine ears, thy face is the beloved of mine eyes, my heart has craved a sight of thee, and now it is satisfied. Welcome once again, O brave deliverer! Follow me, and the meat and drink of gods shall be thy portion—soft couches shall woo thy tired limbs to slumber."

Zeman was very much astonished at this greeting; for it was so very different from what he had expected, and, as he was very tired, he thought that he might partake of the stranger's hospitality.

He followed the old man, who soon arrived at a small house. Zeman glanced round. There was a couch, and on a table was food and drink, but neither seemed the portion of the gods. The old man carefully fastened the door, saying,—

I am poor and helpless, and there are two ravenous birds in the island. I daresay you have heard of them, Presto and Prestine. They will get in if they can, so I have to be careful."

"Yes, I have heard of them. Why don't you try and catch them," Zeman asked.

"How can I, a poor old man?" but his eyes seemed to sparkle and glow more remarkably than ever. He continued, "If I had your powers I might. There is a foolish tale about some golden apples, one of which contains poison that would kill these birds, but I don't believe it. If there were, and I could get them, I could soon rid myself, and my dear daughter, of my enemies and hers."

"I have also heard the tale," quoth Zeman, rendered cautious by past experience, and beginning to feel suspicious of his entertainer.

"My poor child!" the old man broke forth in passionate lamentation, "the apple of my eye, when shall I behold thy beauteous face again—when shall I see thee united to thy loved one, my dear Zeman?" And he threw his arms around him, in what at first appeared an affectionate embrace; but Zeman soon found it getting uncomfortable, and tried to release himself, but still the old man clung to him, winding his arms tightly round him in what would have soon been a deadly hug, but for his struggles.

It seemed vain to twist and writhe, the old man's strength was wonderful, and he heard him hiss—"Mine! mine! never shall you see Hyremtha

again," and then he knew that it was the hateful Yecra.

He clenched his teeth with rage, and again he sent forth his cry—Death to the enemies of *my* Hyremtha!" And then the creature foamed at the mouth with passion, sparks flashed from her eyes, and still the struggle went on. At last Zeman got one hand free, and reached his staff and struck her, so that she let go and fell to the ground, where he held her panting, wriggling, and spitting.

All at once, she turned into her beautiful self whose witcheries had so easily overcome him. She implored him to spare her, and told him that it was for his love that she had done so much. The tears streamed from her beautiful eyes, her hair fell almost to her feet; her dress disclosed the alabaster neck, truly she was enchantingly lovely. She told him if he would love her, he should have gold in inexhaustible stores, and would live so happily, and then the tears streamed forth again, and almost hid the lovelight in her eyes. There was pity in Zeman's heart at her distress, and beauty, and love for him; but then he remembered her wiles before. Now she knelt at his feet praying him to spare her, but

his heart was getting harder and harder, as a vision of the real Hyremtha flashed across his mind. A small fire burned not far from him, suddenly he drew forth the sixth of Alte's hairs and threw it in. With a scream of rage she rushed from the place, all her love once again turned to fury; but as Alte appeared, she disappeared.

"I can't get on without you, my friend," said Zeman, almost exhausted by his struggle.

"You don't call me until you must though. Here, take this," and he handed him a small cup containing something wonderfully refreshing. He was careful not to drink it until he had noticed if it was the cup that had been presented to him so often. Alte observed his scrutiny and laughed.

"You may trust me," was his comment.

"I really don't know who to trust," Zeman replied, sighing, "for I am deceived by everyone."

"Patience, your trials will not last much longer. But you will have to exert all your caution and judgment. What shall I do for you?"

"I want to be conducted straight to the place where I can watch the two birds. And then you must tell me which apple contains the poison."

"You have asked wisely." they were soon at the

foot of a large rock that rose to a tremendous height. The rock was gaunt and bare, without any foothold to climb.

Said Alte: "Presto and Prestine have a nest on the top of that rock, and from it they can watch the enchanted castle. You will have to hide in this cave, for cautiousness is of more use now than reckless bravery. This is the apple that contains the poison."

Saying these words he vanished.

CHAPTER VIII.

ZEMAN looked everywhere, and at last, on the top of the high rock, he fancied that he could see something move, so he hastily hurried into the cave. Then he broke open the golden apple, and beheld inside a mass of yellow dust and some small pipes. He bethought him of his spectacles, and put them on to examine the poison. To his astonishment the pipes were small magic birds with beautiful eyes. For a minute or two he was puzzled what to do with them, when a bright thought flashed across his mind. He found that he could take out the eyes, fill the head with poison, and replace the eyes again, and he joyfully remembered that eyes were said to be those horrible birds' dainty bits.

On glancing round the cave, with his spectacles still on, he found a table spread with

food, of which he gratefully partook. Then he crept to the entrance, and, to his surprise, saw the magic birds hopping about, seemingly alive. After a time he heard a tremendous whirling through the air, and a hideous-looking bird swooped down and pounced on one of the magic ones, whose eyes he speedily tore out; and then it uttered a peculiar cry that seemed to be a call to its mate, for again there was a whirling through the air, and the other one swooped down.

How anxiously Zeman watched the result; but they were still greedily devouring the small birds, uttering hoarse cries of satisfaction. He longed to rush out and despatch them, but he remembered Alte's words—that reckless bravery would be no use now—so he waited as patiently as he could. Then one tottered and fell, and then he rushed out and despatched it with his staff; the other looked on stupidly, then it, too, fell dead!

Oh, the exultation that filled Zeman's heart almost to bursting. He tremblingly opened the mouth of the first one, yes, there was a peculiarly-shaped key; he took it out and carefully hid it away. And then he searched for the feather in the

other that was to oil the lock of the castle, and soon found it.

O how he rejoiced! Then he thought he heard a soft voice singing, and there was Bebo—not the dejected Bebo, but the triumphant one—his voice quivering in an ecstacy of delight.

"What shall I tell my mistress?" he asked, when he had finished his song.

"That I am coming as quickly as I can. That naught shall keep me from her presence now. Tell her to have a little more patience, and a world of hope, for I am coming. Now go to her, my good Bebo."

So the bird flew away; and Zeman turned into the cave again to rest before he resumed his quest. He slept several hours, and awoke refreshed. He set forth to climb the hill that led to the castle; but now he did not shout, for all his strength was concentrated on this last effort. Zeman found that the hill was covered with small pebbles, so that it was almost impossible to go up it, for they rolled under his feet so that he could make no progress; but still he struggled on, not daunted, although it was weary work. After a great many efforts to get

on, and finding that he was only wasting time and strength, he again had recourse to his spectacles, and, behold, his path was clear, and he went ioyfully on his way.

The castle loomed dark and sombre before him, seemingly impregnable. He examined it carefully but could see no door. He peered at the massive walls with his spectacles, but it was of no use. At last, he fancied that he could see the entrance, and hurried towards it, but it disappeared. A mocking laugh rang out on the still air that made Zeman shiver at its diabolical sound, and he guessed that it was his enemy Yecra again. He sat down, almost disheartened, to ponder on what he should do next. He did not want to use his last hair yet. Suddenly he seemed to hear a whisper,—"Try the golden apple." He hastened to do so, and broke it open; there he saw a mass of what seemed cotton. He looked at it in bewilderment; and then it seemed to grow, and grow, and grow, into a strong rope-ladder. Casting his eyes upward to see how and where he could use it, he saw, nearly at the top of the castle, one solitary window.

"If Bebo would only come," he thought, and Bebo fluttered over his head. "Ah! my little

friend, and does your fair mistress still expect me, although it sometimes seems impossible that I shall ever get to her?"

"Yes," replied the bird.

"But," said Zeman, a very natural doubt crossing his mind. "She may not love me when I do get her out."

"Wathra has taken care that she should, and here is a token from her, so that she will know you are the true Zeman, and not the hideous Gamecrane in disguise." The bird lifted up its wing, and he saw a tiny parcel fastened underneath.

Inside was a white stone. He took it into his hand, and it changed to a beautiful opal. The colours seemed to shimmer beneath the pure mist that softened their brilliancy. Zeman gazed in admiration and delight at the beauteous gem.

Said Bebo, "If an impostor went to my mistress with that opal in his hand, he would only see a white stone. But in your hands you behold what it is. That is Wathra's gift. Now, shall I take the ladder?"

"Can you?" Zeman asked, doubtfully surveying the little creature. Seizing one end in its beak, it flew with it up to the window and there fastened

it. Then Zeman climbed up to the room of his lady love, as he imagined, but the room was empty, and there was no visible outlet. And, to his dismay, there was sudden dense darkness—such thick darkness, that he could not even move. He fumbled for his spectacles, but they were no use now. He heard a voice say,—

"Give me the stone, and it will be light again."

"Never," was his answer. Then he burnt his last hair, and his friend Alte was again by his side, for the last time, as he said. The darkness had fled.

"I want you, my friend, to tell me how to get out of this room, and into Hyremtha's presence," said Zeman.

"That I cannot do. But I can set you on the right path. But, beware of everything. Use your spectacles when you have the slightest doubt about any matter, for your enemies are getting desperate."

And so this helpful friend disappeared never to appear again. Zeman found himself at the entrance of a long passage, and at the end of it all, Alte had told him, was Hyremtha's prison. The key would unlock the door, after it had been oiled, and then

his quest would be over. He felt very joyful, for the passage was no great length. So he began his walk, but so soon as he had taken about half-a-dozen steps, a deep chasm opened at his feet, and noxious vapours filled the air, and hideous howlings met his ears. In the midst of the din, he could hear a voice calling "Help! Help!"

A voice at his side said,—"Gamecrane has Hyremtha at last. I will help you rescue her, my friend?"

Turning, he beheld Wathra. "Is it you, my benefactress? I was just going to look at the difficulties through the glasses that you gave me. However can I thank you for them?"

"By giving them to me again; for, my son, they will be quite useless now you are so near the end of your journeyings."

Zeman was very much astonished at this speech, for it was so very different to what Alte had told him. He found himself drawing nearer and nearer the gulf, with Wathra by his side. The poisonous fumes were in his nostrils. He turned to look at Wathra, something seemed to force him to put on the glasses, and, to his amazement, the chasm was gone, and only a sound of

baffled rage escaped from the false Wathra as she hurried away.

So he went on again with fresh courage; but he had again removed his spectacles, for he did not seem to require them, and a sigh seemed to float through the corridor, but he knew not from whence it came. The door was very near now, only about a dozen steps, and he would reach it. All at once his feet refused to move; for they were fastened to the ground, he could see no trace of how they were fastened, but he hastily enough put on the magic glasses this time, and found that each foot was held by a beautiful, shapely hand that he knew belonged to the relentless Yecra. In a minute he struck one with his staff, and was able to go on again. And then a thought flashed through his mind that he would get on quicker if he kept his trusty glasses on until the end of his journey; and as he decided on doing so, a burst of jubilant, triumphant music sounded through the place, and Zeman knew that his quest was very nearly ended—nay, he instinctively knew, also, that he was doing the RIGHT by taking TRUTH, his glasses, for his guide, and now he beheld his friends with the beautiful lights clustering round him, congratu-

lating him as one of themselves, and, to his astonishment, he found one of the pure flames in his bosom.

Well, he was near the door, he oiled the rusty lock with trembling fingers, and then placed the key within it——It flew open, and there stood Wathra, holding by the hand the beautiful Hyremtha. He went eagerly forward and presented his opal. Said Wathra,—

"My son, this is but a token of your faith in me and the one whom you have so constantly sought. Take her, for you have won her by means placed within your power, where others have failed. May you be happy in each other's love."

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